

New York was boosted by a total of 141,000 jobs through the fourth quarter of 2009 by the investments we made through the Recovery Act. It also shows that real per capita personal income in New York was 43,000 in the third quarter of 2009, down from 45,000 in the third quarter of 2007.

There is also useful information on housing for each State, and it too varies enormously. For instance, the median price for single family homes in New York was \$290,000 in 2008, compared to \$250,000 nationwide. And in New York in November, housing starts increased by 52 percent over October to a total of 18,000 units at a seasonally adjusted annual rate.

You can review the report online at www.jec.senate.gov. The majority staff will continue to update the data throughout the year in order to track the progress our economy will be making month by month. But from this first edition, it is abundantly clear why this Congress is so focused on job growth. Americans are demanding, and rightly so, that we must do all we can to grow the economy and help create new private sector jobs. The hard facts and real-life consequences of the economic policies of the prior administration don't make for a very pretty picture right now.

Mr. Speaker, stay tuned. The American spirit of innovation is on the way and individual resilience are ready and raring to go.

□ 1945

DON'T LET DEBT DEFEAT A GREAT NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, soon the Congress will be asked to raise the debt limit of this Nation. This actually happened under the previous administration, and now it's happening under the new administration.

I have not voted, from the time I have been in Congress, to raise this debt ceiling because all this really does is permit our government to borrow more money from foreign governments. I think we all know that we are what is called a debtor nation. We don't pay our bills anymore. We have to go to the Japanese, the Chinese, the UAE, and to many other countries to buy our debt so we can spend more. That is the reason I wanted to come to the floor tonight.

Before we broke for Christmas, FRANK WOLF had sent out to each Member of the House a little pamphlet that says, "Don't Let Debt Defeat a Great Nation." He and JIM COOPER, in a bipartisan way—FRANK WOLF being a Republican; JIM COOPER a Democrat—have introduced H.R. 1557, the SAFE Commission Act, and I want to talk about that in the little bit of time I have.

And I am reading from his publication, Mr. WOLF's publication. "We have amassed massive unfunded 'promises' to guarantee future entitlement benefits that when added with liabilities like the debt, total nearly \$57 trillion. That means every man, woman and child in America owes \$184,000."

I have used this back in my district, and I like to say it this way, Mr. Speaker. When that beautiful baby is born, the first cry out of his or her mouth is a cry of, "Do I owe \$184,000?" Yes, baby, you do owe \$184,000. Every American does.

This could, according to the information from FRANK WOLF, skyrocket to \$21 trillion by the year 2020. How do FRANK WOLF and JIM COOPER, in a bipartisan effort, try to deal with this out-of-control spending? They have introduced, again, H.R. 1557, the SAFE Commission Act. And the actual title on it is the Securing America's Future Economy—SAFE Act.

How does this function? This would create a SAFE Commission. This would be made up of 16 bipartisan appointed people to be on this SAFE Commission Act, and it would be their responsibility to go through how government spends its money, from the entitlements to the spending on education, transportation, health care, national defense, tax policy, and other items. This commission would come back to Congress, if this should become the law, and then Congress would be required to vote up or down on the panels's proposal.

Now, how this panel would come up with this proposal is they would go around this country and they would hold hearings and listen to the American people—something we have not been doing, either party, quite frankly. We are not listening to the American people. Yes, we are now, and after what happened in Massachusetts a couple weeks ago, the American people are being heard and they've been heard by many of us when we go back home and do our own town meetings. But this commission would have the authority, should this become the law, to say to the Congress, You can't duck these votes. You're going to have to vote up or down. I think this is critical.

I would love to hear the President tomorrow night—I hope somebody has made him aware of this bipartisan effort known as the SAFE Commission, and I hope he would say tomorrow night that he would endorse this legislation and encourage the Democratic leadership in the House and the Republican leadership in the House to get behind this bill.

At this present time, Mr. Speaker, we have 109 Members of Congress who have cosponsored this legislation. I hope my other colleagues will look seriously at what Mr. COOPER and Mr. WOLF have done to try to bring to the American people hope that we can meet our obligations based on the Constitution and deal with this out-of-control spending here in Washington, D.C. that both parties are responsible for.

With that, Mr. Speaker, before I leave, as I do every night on the floor, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform, to please bless their families, and I ask God to hold in his arms the families who've given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq.

And, Mr. Speaker, three times, I ask God to please, please God, please God, please God, continue to bless America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONGRESSIONAL JOBS NOW CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the single most important concern for Americans throughout our Nation is the vast and growing rate of joblessness. This is not difficult to understand. Bob Herbert asked in a recent New York Times column, "How loud do alarm bells have to ring?"

More than 15 million Americans—more than 1 in 10 people—are out of work. Another 15 million people are underemployed or have quit looking. That means that over 30 million Americans want to work but cannot find the job they want. More people join their ranks every single day. Worse, 4 in 10 unemployed workers have been jobless for 27 weeks or longer.

Yes, we have a jobs crisis in our country, and it's everybody's number one issue. That's why I joined with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to form the Congressional Jobs Now Caucus, to keep the focus where it needs to be. That's why I sponsored bills to create jobs in America to stem our rising trade deficits and to bring justice to Wall Street, which has shut down normal lending across this country, contributing to the jobs crisis.

Job creation is not a Republican issue or a Democratic issue. We are all in this together. Last month, Toledo, a city I represent, lost an additional 1,200 jobs. Added to the yearly tally, more than 38,600 individuals, or 11.8 percent of the city's population, are without work.

The unemployment rate in the adjoining rural Ottawa County, also in our district, is now over 17 percent. Again, these are official numbers which did not include those who have part-time jobs and need more hours or those who have simply given up because there are no jobs to be had.

Job creation is not just an urban issue. The damage has spread to the suburbs of our country, and no one is safe from the jobs hemorrhage. In fact,